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PLIP
I BELIEVED IN SANTA CLAUS TOO...
...BUT I GREW OUT OF IT.
IT'S STRANGE THAT THIS PHOTO OF MATT MURDOCK AND ME AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IS THE ONLY KEEPSAKE THAT SURVIVED THE FIRE THAT GUTTED MY APARTMENT.
FOGGY NELSON SNAPPED IT ON THE STEPS OF THE LIBRARY.
THE OPEN BOOK ON MATT'S LAP WAS A JOKE, OF COURSE.
WHAT WOULD OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN LIKE HAD MY FATHER NOT BEEN KILLED...
...IF I HADN'T BECOME AN ASSASSIN...
... AND MATT HAD NOT BECOME DAREDEVIL?

WHAT WOULD MY LIFE BE LIKE TODAY IF THE HAND HADN'T SENT KURO-YAMA HERE TO COLLECT MY DEBT TO THEM?
KUROYAMA, WHO WAS BROUGHT BACK FROM THE DEAD BY THE HAND, JUST AS THEY DID FOR ME.
THAT'S HIS KUSARI-GAMA...
..THE SICKLE AND CHAIN THAT HE USED TO DEFEAT MY SAI TECHNIQUE.
SHUKK
THIS IS WHERE KUROYAMA DISARMED ME AND PINNED ME TO THE FLOOR.

HE MADE ME WATCH.
HE MADE ME WATCH AS MY WARD NINA STRUGGLED IN HIS IRON GRASP.
HE MADE ME WATCH...
...AS HE CUT HER LIVING HEART OUT OF HER CHEST!

Oh, the hand put her back together again.
But her soul belonged to them.
They would have made a perfect assassin out of her, but for the core of purity that was still within her.
That purity was the leverage we used to win her back from the darkness.
But the wounds to her soul were such that only the chaste could heal them.
RIP
So I took her to the mountain...
FSSSSSS
...and she climbed it.

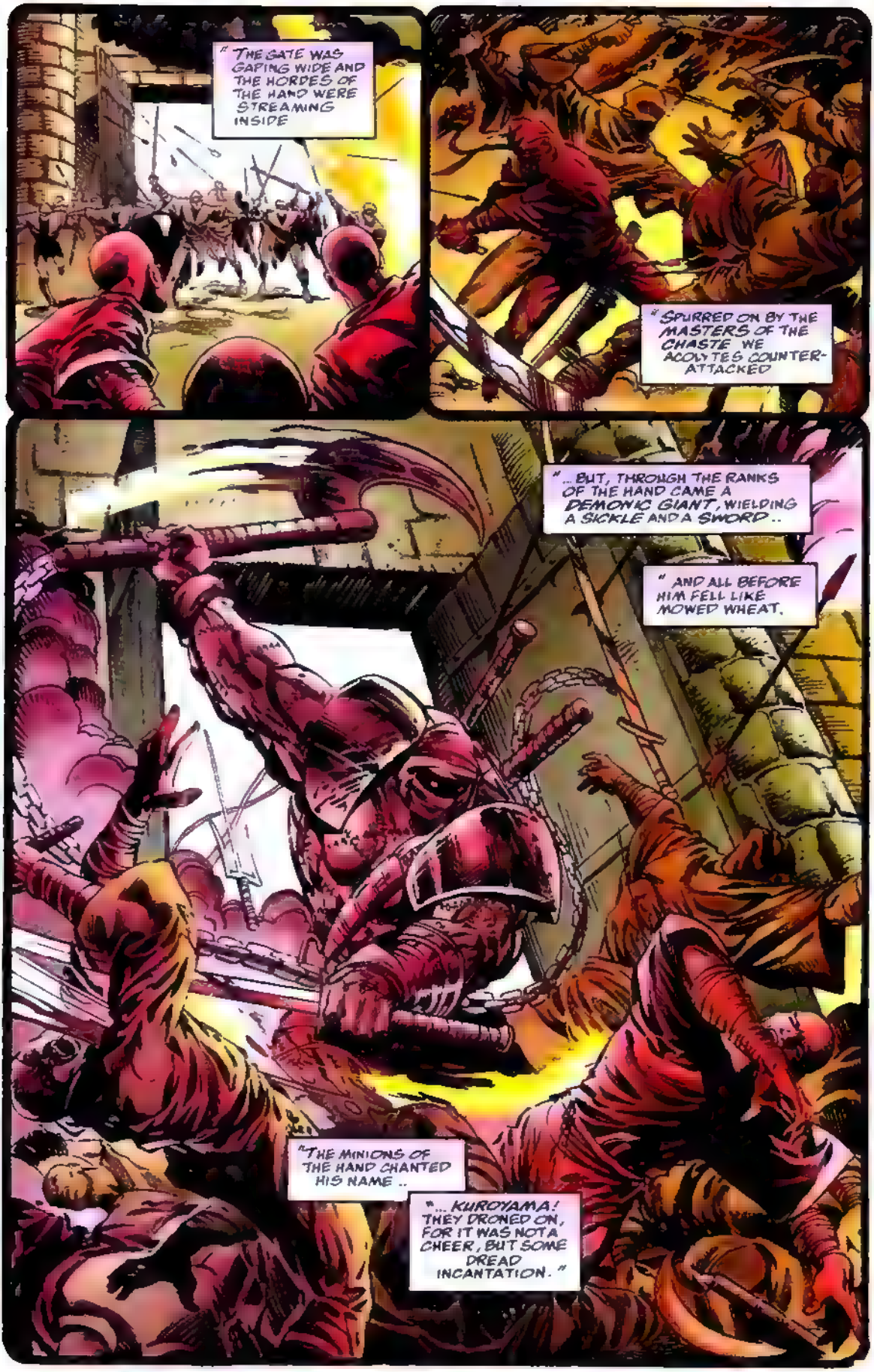
STICK!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
YOU NEVER LOOKED THIS ...VAGUE BEFORE!
WHAT NUGGET OF WISDOM HAVE YOU COME TO IMPART TODAY?
YOU CAN'T BE AT A LOSS FOR WORDS...
...SO SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO DRASTICALLY CHANGE THE ORDER OF THINGS!

WHAT?
SOMEBODY OUTSIDE MY DOOR -- ON THE LANDING?
SOMEBODY COMING UP THE STAIRS?
IT'S AN ACOLYTE OF THE CHASTE!
THOSE ARROWS BEAR THE FLETCHES OF THE HAND!
ACOLYTE! HOW HAS THE HAND WOUNDED YOU SO GRAVELY..?
...AND WHY ARE YOU IN NEW YORK, SO FAR FROM THE MOUNTAIN?

I HAVE COME TO SLAY A TRAITOR!
YOU THINK THAT ELEKTRA WOULD BETRAY THE CHASTE??
I KNOW SO!!
IT IS BY YOUR HAND THAT THE CHASTE HAS FALLEN!
SCHING
YOU BABBLE NONSENSE, MAN!
KILL ME AND BE DONE WITH IT, TRAITOR!
I HAVE FAILED TO AVENGE MY BROTHERS, AND MY WOUNDS ARE MORTAL--

IT IS NOT MY PLACE TO PUNISH MADMEN.
IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE CHASTE TO FALL.
Y-YOU DON'T KNOW?
COULD IT BE?
YOUR AURA--
--IT IS NOT SULLIED.
AH! THEY LIED!!
OF COURSE, THEY LIED! THEY ARE THE HAND!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING--
--THE CHASTE HAS FALLEN TO THE HAND??
THE MOUNTAIN HAS BEEN TAKEN?!?
YES!!
THEY CAME THROUGH THE GATES!!
WHAT DID THEY DO TO NINA?!

WHAT DID THEY DO TO NINA?
IT WAS NINA WHO OPENED THE GATES AND LET THE NINJAS OF THE HAND IN!
NO!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT!
I WON'T BELIEVE THAT!
BELIEVE WHATEVER YOU WILL, ELEKTRA. I KNOW WHAT I SAW.
WE ACOLYTES AWOKE TO THE CLAMOR OF BATTLE AND THE LIGHT FROM THE BURNING BATTLEMENTS!


"THE GATE WAS GAPING WIDE AND THE HORDES OF THE HAND WERE STREAMING INSIDE
"SPURRED ON BY THE MASTERS OF THE CHASTE WE ACOLYTES COUNTER-ATTACKED
"... BUT, THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE HAND CAME A DEMONIC GIANT, WIELDING A SICKLE AND A SWORD..
" AND ALL BEFORE HIM FELL LIKE MOWED WHEAT.
"THE MINIONS OF THE HAND CHANTED HIS NAME ..
"... KUROYAMA! THEY DRONED ON, FOR IT WAS NOT A CHEER, BUT SOME DREAD INCANTATION."

"I RALLIED THE FEW SURVIVORS TO ATTACK THE GIANT.
"...BUT OUR BEST EFFORTS WERE FUTILE AGAINST THE INEXORABLE BEHEMOTH.
"AT CLOSE QUARTERS I COULD SEE KURODAMA WAS A DEAD AND BROKEN THING, COBBLED TOGETHER AND REANIMATED BY SOME DARK AND ELDRITCH FORCE.
"THE STINK OF THE GRAVE WAFTED OFF HIM AND THE LIGHTS IN HIS EYES WERE KINDLED FROM HELL.
"I WONDERED HOW THE HAND HAD MANAGED TO BREACH THE GATES OF OUR CITADEL

"...AND THEN THE ANSWER APPEARED FROM BEHIND KUROYAMA.
"IT WAS NINA!
"SHE WAS ONE OF THEIRS FROM THE VERY BEGINNING!
"IT WAS SHE WHO OPENED THE GATES!
"IT WAS SHE WHO GAVE ME THIS SCAR ACROSS MY FACE!
"HOW DID SHE FOOL US?
"HOW DID SHE DECEIVE EVEN STICK?"

BROKE MY FALL BY GRABBING A TINY LEDGE.
I FLED DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE HAND IN HOT PURSUIT.
THEY CHASED ME THROUGH NEPAL, BURMA, AND THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE.
IT HAS BEEN A LONG, ARDUOUS FLIGHT W TH THE DOGS OF THE HAND AT MY HEELS EVERY INCH OF THE WAY...
. ALL THIS TO TRACK YOU DOWN AND PAY YOU BACK FOR YOUR BETRAYAL . SINCE IT WAS YOU WHO BROUGHT NINA TO US!
BUT NOW I SEE THAT I WAS WRONG!
I HAVE BESMIRCHED MY OWN PURITY BY SEEKING VENGEANCE!
YOU MUST NOT FALL INTO THE SAME TRAP!
THE CONTINUANCE OF THE CHASTE DEPENDS ON YOU!
YOU MUST REESTABLISH THE ORDER AND PUT THINGS RIGHT WITH NINA WITHOUT GIVING IN TO THE DARK PASSION OF REVENGE!
HOW DO I DO THAT?!?
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE! IT'S BEYOND MY--
HE'S DEAD!
Oh, STICK--
--WHAT NOW?
ASSASSINS OF THE HAND?

THERE SHE IS!!
WASTE HER!!
BLAMM BLAMM
THESE ARE NO HIGH-BINDERS OF THE HAND--
~THESE ARE BUT COMMON THUGS!!
THWAMM

THUG?!
I'M A MADE MAN! I MADE MY BONES BEFORE--
THAT IS NOT AN ACCOMPLISH-MENT TO BE BOASTING OF!
THOOMM
EEEEE
HUBRIS CAN GET YOU KILLED.
SO CAN GIVING THE WRONG ANSWERS!
IT'S NOT PERSONAL, ELEKTRA!
IT'S JUST BUSINESS!

IT WAS THE KINGPIN!
HE PUT THE WORD OUT TO WHACK YOU AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO THOSE GUYS IN THE PENT-HOUSE! *
*ELEKTRA #16.
IT WAS THE KINGPIN WHO SICCED ME ON THOSE SLIMEBALLS IN THE PENT-HOUSE!
SURE! RIGHT! BUT THE FAT MAN HAS TO KEEP UP APPEAR-ANCES, DIG?
IT'S BUSINESS!
Y-YOU GONNA K-KILL US NOW, ELEKTRA?
ELEKTRA?

So.
I HAVE NO HOME
THE CHASTE IS FALLEN.
THERE IS AN OPEN CONTRACT OUT ON ME...
..AND EVEN MY OLD MENTOR STICK HAS BEEN REDUCED TO A VOICELESS WRAITH...
WHAT MORE COULD--
. AND NOW, BRINGING US AN UPDATE ON THE CONTINUING DRAGNET FOR THE SERIAL KILLER KNOWN AS ELEKTRA...
. HERE IS TRISH TILBY AT ONE POLICE PLAZA WITH CHIEF REILLY..
SO CHIEF REILLY, WHAT HAS YOUR ELEKTRA TASK FORCE UNCOVERED ?
WE'VE DONE AN EXTENSIVE DEEP BACKGROUND SCAN ON THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR, TRISH
WE ALL KNOW THAT SHE STARRED IN A BIG DANCE PRODUCTION PUT ON BY KONRAD WEISS AND HAD TAKEN BROADWAY BY STORM...

WE'VE NOW ASCERTAINED THROUGH INTERPOL, THE FBI AND CIA, THAT SHE IS AN INTERNATIONAL ASSASSIN WITH TIES TO THE HAND AND SOME MYSTIC CULT CALLED THE CHASTE.
ELEKTRA IS NOW TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL. HER LATEST RAMPAGE WAS AT THE DOJO OF ONETIME FRIEND FORMER HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER MCKINLEY STEWART, WHO IS NOW IN A COMA--
MAC!
THEY DID THAT TO MAC AND BLAMED IT ON ME!?!
STICK!
THE HAND HAS DESTROYED MY HOME, ATTACKED MY FRIENDS AND ANNIHILATED THE CHASTE!
I'M HUNTED BY THE MOB, THE HAND, AND THE POLICE!
AND I'M SUPPOSED TO MAKE ALL THIS RIGHT WITHOUT RESORTING TO VENGEANCE?!
ANSWER ME!!

ANSWER ME!!
THERE ARE NO ANSWERS, ELEKTRA..!
Who?
...AT LEAST NOT FOR YOU!
WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TO LIFT ANOTHER FINGER AGAINST YOU...
...SINCE THE WHOLE WORLD IS STANDING IN LINE TO SHOOT YOU DOWN LIKE A MAD DOG!!

NINA~!
~AND KUROYAMA!
YOU HAD BETTER WATCH YOUR BACK, ELEKTRA, SINCE WE'VE SEEN FIT TO DO OUR CIVIC DUTY--
--AND CALL THE POLICE!
AAOOOWW
PUT YOUR HANDS UP AND WALK SLOWLY TOWARDS THE CAR!
AAOOWW
SHE'S BOLTING!
SHOOT HER DOWN!
SHE'S GETTING AWAY!!

BLAMM
BLAMM
SHE WON'T GET FAR--THERE'S NO PLACE ON EARTH SHE CAN HIDE FROM EVERYBODY THAT'S LOOKING FOR HER!
NO!
I'M NOT DOWN FOR THE COUNT YET!
I AM GOING TO CLEAR MY NAME.
I AM GOING TO RESTORE THE CHASTE!
I AM GOING TO RECLAIM NINA!
ALL THIS I SWEAR!
THE END.

SAI'D BAR

POLLY WATSON ASSISTANT EDITOR

BOBBIE CHASE EDITOR

BOB HARRAS CHIEF

Well, everyone, it's been a great year and a half, but it's time for ELEKTRA to come to an end, at least for now. You now hold in your hands the very last issue. Judging from all the mail we've received from you regarding the series' end, we can tell that ELEKTRA will be greatly missed. It'll be missed by us, as well. Let's face it, Elektra is just awesome, right?

On behalf of the entire creative and editorial team, we express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to you, ELEKTRA's loyal fans, for making this book the success it was for as long as it lasted. Without you, all the hard work put into the series would have been pointless. But enough from us. Let's hear what some of you have to say about the series' end...

Dear Bobbie and Polly,

With great regret I have read that ELEKTRA will be canceled. My question is: Why? While ELEKTRA was never a best-selling title, it had a very loyal readership. That's at least my interpretation of the "Top 100." It seems that creative reasons were the main problem. After Mike Deodato, Jr. fulfilled his 20-issue contract you needed a new artist and obviously couldn't find one. I can't believe that. There are so many talented people out there; why don't you give one of them a chance?

I read ELEKTRA since the first issue and while I had a lot to criticize, I never lost faith in the book or the character. It's true that Mike Deodato, Jr. was the perfect artist for this title but I'm sure that there would have been others who could have taken his place. I am sorry that you don't have enough confidence in Elektra and the readers to give the book a chance.

There are so many stories left to tell about ELEKTRA, so many questions unanswered. Now that the book comes to an end, what will happen to Elektra? Will she degenerate into a mere supporting character of DAREDEVIL again? What about her own supporting cast? Will they just fade away into comic book limbo? Only time will tell.

That said, there is only one thing left to do. I'd like to thank: Peter Milligan for making this a great title right from the start and for creating an interesting supporting cast; Larry Hama for bringing the story to new heights and to an end; Mike Deodato, Jr. for his more than 400 pages of wonderful art and an uninterrupted twenty issue run (something rarely seen in today's industry); and of course all the other people who gave their best to make this book as beautiful as it was. I also thank you, the editors, for holding everything together and for publishing my letter in ELEKTRA #12.

It's been two great years. I just wish they weren't over yet. Well, time's up. Say good-bye, raise your fists, scream "Bansai!" and get on with your lives.

Lars Meyer
Kiel, Germany

Thanks for the kind words, Lars. Peter, Larry, Mike, and the rest of the team really put their hearts and souls into what they do, and it really has shone through on ELEKTRA. But please, we don't want you to go away thinking that Mike quit--he didn't! The whole team was planning to stay on, but the sales have been lousy for months. (Despite our loyal, but unfortunately small, fan group.)

Dear Polly and Bobbie,

Please reconsider the decision to cancel ELEKTRA. I really enjoy reading the stories, and the art-work is excellent. Please spare the comic!

Laura Valdes
Bridgeport, IL

'Nuff said, Laura. Sadly, the decision's been made, and there's no turning back now.

Dear *Sai'd Bar*,

I've been a fan of Elektra since the Frank Miller days (through back issues, anyway). I think she's just one of the best female characters ever created in any comic universe. She's beautiful, she's intelligent, and she's strong. Sure, she's done a lot of questionable things and committed certain crimes in her past, but she's atoned for all that, and has evolved into someone we can consider a role model.

That said, you can imagine how upset I was when I heard that ELEKTRA is being canceled. I can't believe it! I look forward to ELEKTRA each and every month, waiting to see what problem Elektra will undoubtedly solve or what villain's plans she'll thwart. Elektra may not always know what the best way to handle a situation is, but in my opinion, she comes through okay in the end.

Well, I guess for now I'll have to rely on guest appearances and the like to get my dose of Elektra. I'll miss the guaranteed excitement ELEKTRA brings me each and every month, but I guess catching her random appearances from now on will make whatever dose of Elektra I get seem that much more special. Wow, I guess that as long as I think positively, the canceling of the series really isn't that bad after all.

Ahh, who am I kidding? I'm going to miss ELEKTRA. And so are a lot of other fans out there, I'm sure. But, I guess there's not much I can do about it, so I'll just have to accept it.

Thanks, everyone, for a great series! Okay, okay. So I haven't really read all of them yet. I'm just assuming that the last few issues will be just as good as the rest. And even though I'll be distraught after I've read my last issue of ELEKTRA, I'll try to remember all the great times I had reading it. Thanks, everyone!

Reggie Sieglowski
Seattle, WA

We couldn't have put it better ourselves, Reggie! We're just as sad as anyone to see ELEKTRA go, but we're pretty proud of the impressive run the book had! Eighteen issues is nothing to laugh at!

Well, this is it. Thanks, all of you, for enjoying ELEKTRA as much as we did! But fear not! Elektra will still be a powerful force in the Marvel Universe! The fact that she's not in her own monthly book now just means that the bad guys won't be able to keep tabs on her anymore! Heh heh. See ya!

DESIGN BY COMICRAFT

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